

WHEEL OF MASTERY

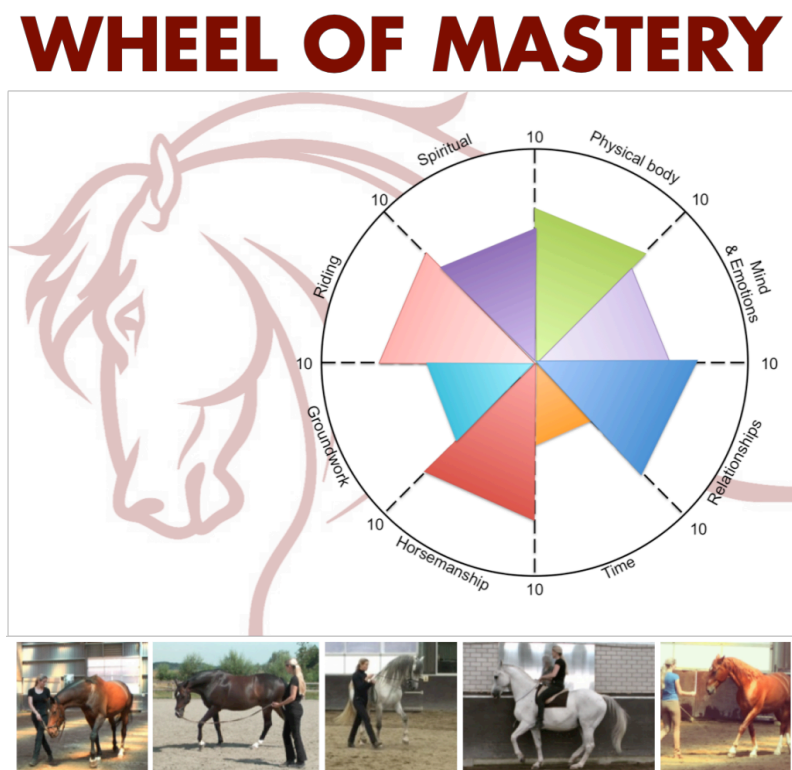
Straightness Training is all about balance, so let's proclaim October the month of the "Balance Assessment". In preparation for the ST Academy opening for enrollment soon – something that only happens once per year with very limited space – I'd like to give you a taste of what it's all about.

Mastery, and becoming the best trainer we can be is not only about mastering our riding or training skills. We also have to find the right balance of attention for the following areas of mastery:

1. Physical Body
2. Minds & Emotions
3. Relationships
4. Time
5. Horsemanship
6. Groundwork
7. Riding
8. Contribution & fulfillment

Now if all our energy is focused on a special area, we find yourself "off-balance" - not paying enough attention to other important areas.

The Wheel of Mastery helps you identify areas that need more attention to become the best horse trainer you can be. This picture represents the wheel of mastery. The wheel is divided up into 8 areas, so let me walk you through these areas:



1. MASTER YOUR PHYSICAL BODY

"We are the example."

We want our horse to be supple, muscular and athletic and to have good coordination, balance, and rhythm. Since this is only possible when horse and rider move together as one, and since the horse mirrors the rider, it is obvious that we should strive for the same qualities that we want in our horse. Also, it's tough to train a horse if we don't have the energy.

So balance yourself in this area, do some exercise (Pilates, swimming, martial arts), get enough sleep, breath effectively, drink enough water, and eat water-rich foods, leafy green vegetables, avocados, nuts, seeds, olive and coconut oil, ginger and turmeric, and other healthy food.

Choose to stay away from nutritionally empty (fast)foods and other unhealthy stuff to maximize your energy, vitality, and health.



2. MASTER YOUR MIND, ENERGY & EMOTIONS

"You will never have to tell your horse that you are sad, happy, confident, angry or relaxed. He already knows—long before you do!"



The emotions and energy we project will influence our horse.

So it's very important that we master our energy and emotions and the cause of our emotions:

- our meanings,
- beliefs, and
- rules.



Our thoughts have the power to create and the power to destroy. Some thoughts give rise to empowering feelings and emotions, some thoughts give rise to disempowering feelings and emotions. So if we want to change your emotions, we have to change your thoughts.

If you choose your thoughts, you'll be able to master your emotions and your state and that will improve the relationship with your horse and others.

3. MASTER YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

"The quality of our life is the quality of our relationships with others."

We can't learn, develop and become a master all by ourselves. People and horses are our greatest resource, we need them and they need us.

So let's nurture and grow our relationships. Make everyone your mentor and learn from everyone you know. And be a coach, not a critic.

Mastery of your relationships will give you unlimited resources for growing and contributing.



4. MASTER YOUR TIME

“Find time – Take time – Make time.”

Masterpieces take time. You always have time for the things that are important to you, if you don't have time, it's not important.

We all have the same 24 hours a day, but ask yourself: how wisely are you using yours?

- *I don't have time...*
- *I was up too late...*
- *I had a long week...*

We must determine how we focus and spend our time each day in order to create mastery in all areas.



5. MASTER YOUR HORSEMANSHIP

“Everything you think you know about horses may change with the very next horse.”

If we have a vision for ourselves and our horse, and we want to have a good relationship, achieve something, or reach some level in our chosen discipline, then we have to be a good leader, coach or guide to our horse.

True leaders have the ability to care, to adjust to the horse, to give their horse what he needs, and to connect with their horse so they can teach him the things he needs to know.

Good horsemen are constantly observing and training themselves to be the best leader and guide they can be. With each horse, they become a better horse trainer and a better person.

6. MASTER YOUR GROUNDWORK

“In pursuing mastery, riding is only one part of what we need to become good at.”



A big part of the wheel doesn't involve riding at all and yet that is where great achievements can be made, especially in groundwork, longeing, work in hand and liberty training.

Well thought-through gymnastic exercises on the ground prepare our horse for riding.

Through work on the ground, our horse can be made more supple, can build up muscles and fitness and can improve coordination before additional weight is added to the horse's back.

Groundwork has a lot of benefits for both horse and rider. It is useful for a young horse, but also for experienced well-trained horses to help the horse to stay in shape, and to give some variety to the training routine. A great benefit is the ability to study our horse from the ground and observe the movements, the gaits, the musculature, the rhythm, the fitness, alertness and the improvements our horse is making.

7. MASTER THE ART OF RIDING

"If the art were not so difficult we would have plenty of good riders and excellently ridden horses".

In the art of riding, we strive for actualizing our horse's full potential in complete harmony.

Through a set of logically structured exercises, horse and rider are trained according to their possibilities and talents - both physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually - towards a level that is comfortable for both.

In this area, we optimize our knowledge and skills when it comes to the seat, leg, rein and whip aids, the use of our balance, center, and energy, and the influence of our inner picture and feeling – which is a process of **Constant And Never-ending Improvement (CANI)**.



8. CONTRIBUTION & SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT

"We grow so we have something to give."



Along the way, you and your horse will grow spiritually:

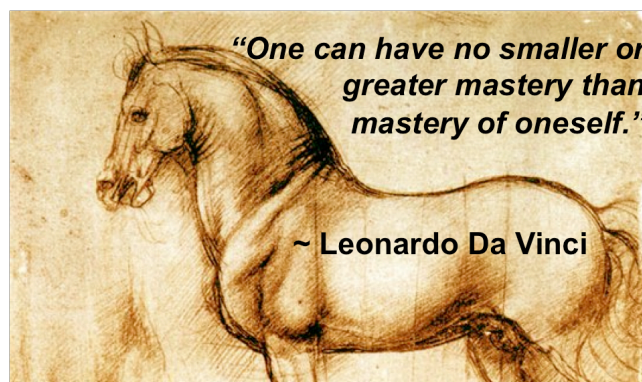
Your horse becomes the best horse he can be, and you become the best rider you can be.

Contribution should be the driving force behind everything we do. It is not what we get, but who we become, what we contribute, that gives meaning and fulfillment to our lives.

So this area is about a spiritual sense of service and focus on helping, giving and supporting your horse, and perhaps other riders if you are or planning to become an instructor.

You will be spiritually fulfilled if you are sharing what you mastered and are contributing to your horse or help other riders achieving their dreams too.

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6 STEPS TO FINDING BALANCE IN YOUR WHEEL OF MASTERY

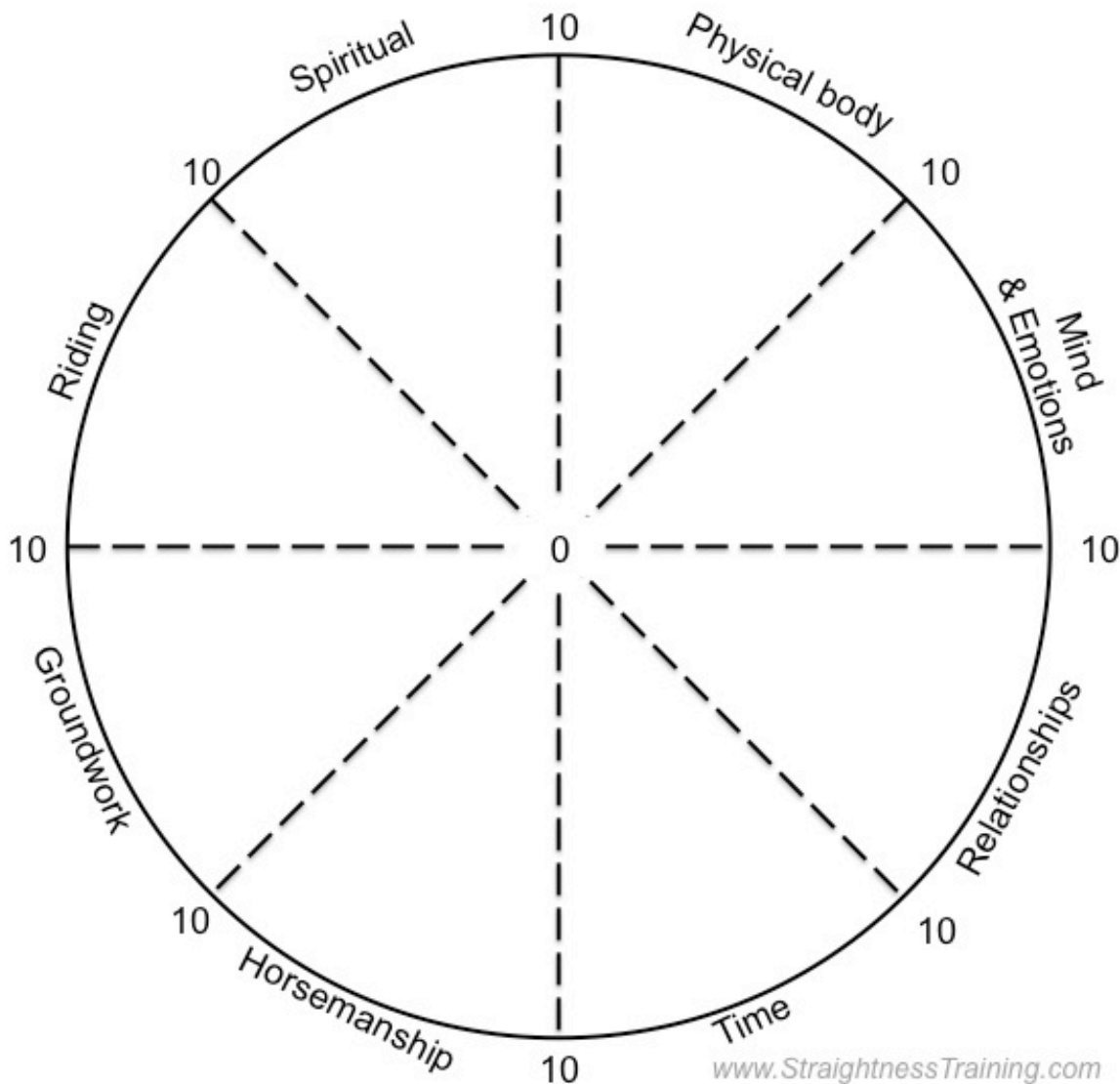
The selection of the areas in this example represents my vision of what defines a Master Rider.

All areas of mastery can be placed in a wheel, which gives us a visual representation of the balance between all those areas.

We can use the following steps to create our Wheel of Mastery and assess our balance.

1. GRADE YOURSELF

Grade yourself on a scale of 0 to 10 where you are today, taking one area at a time. The middle of the circle corresponds to 'zero' and the outside ring of the circle corresponds to '10'.

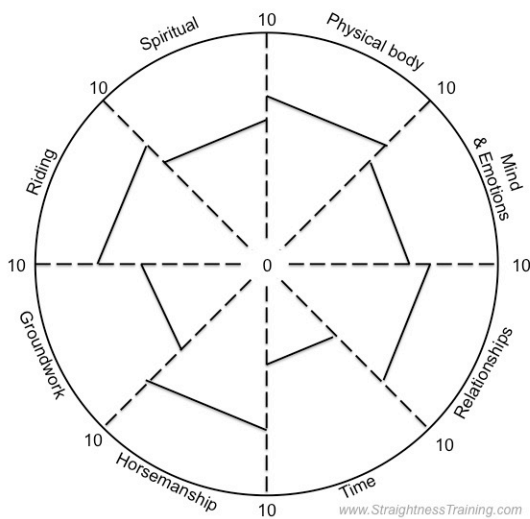


For example, you might rate yourself at a '7' in your physical health, a '5' in your emotional mastery, a '8' in your relationships, a '3' in your ability to master time, a '6' in your horsemanship, a '4' in your groundwork, a '7' in your riding, and a '6' in your spirituality.

2. DRAW LINES

Once you assessed and rated yourself in each area, draw lines between your graduations.

Then, it might look like this.

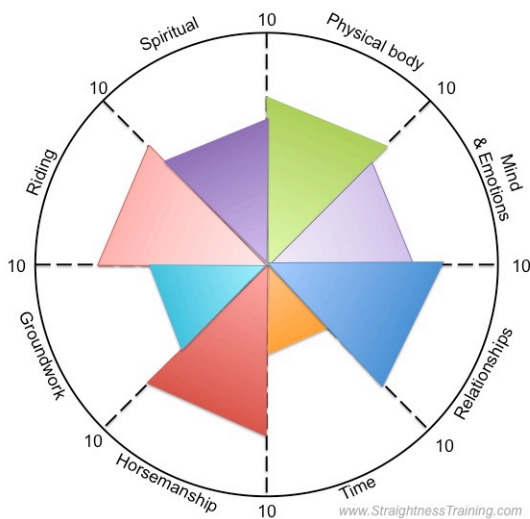


3. COLOUR EACH SECTION

The next step is to color each section to get a true picture of where you really are in each area.

What are the gaps?

It might look like this.



4. EVALUATE YOUR WHEEL

What kind of wheel do you have? Imagine if you are going 100 miles an hour with this wheel - which isn't round at all - would you survive?

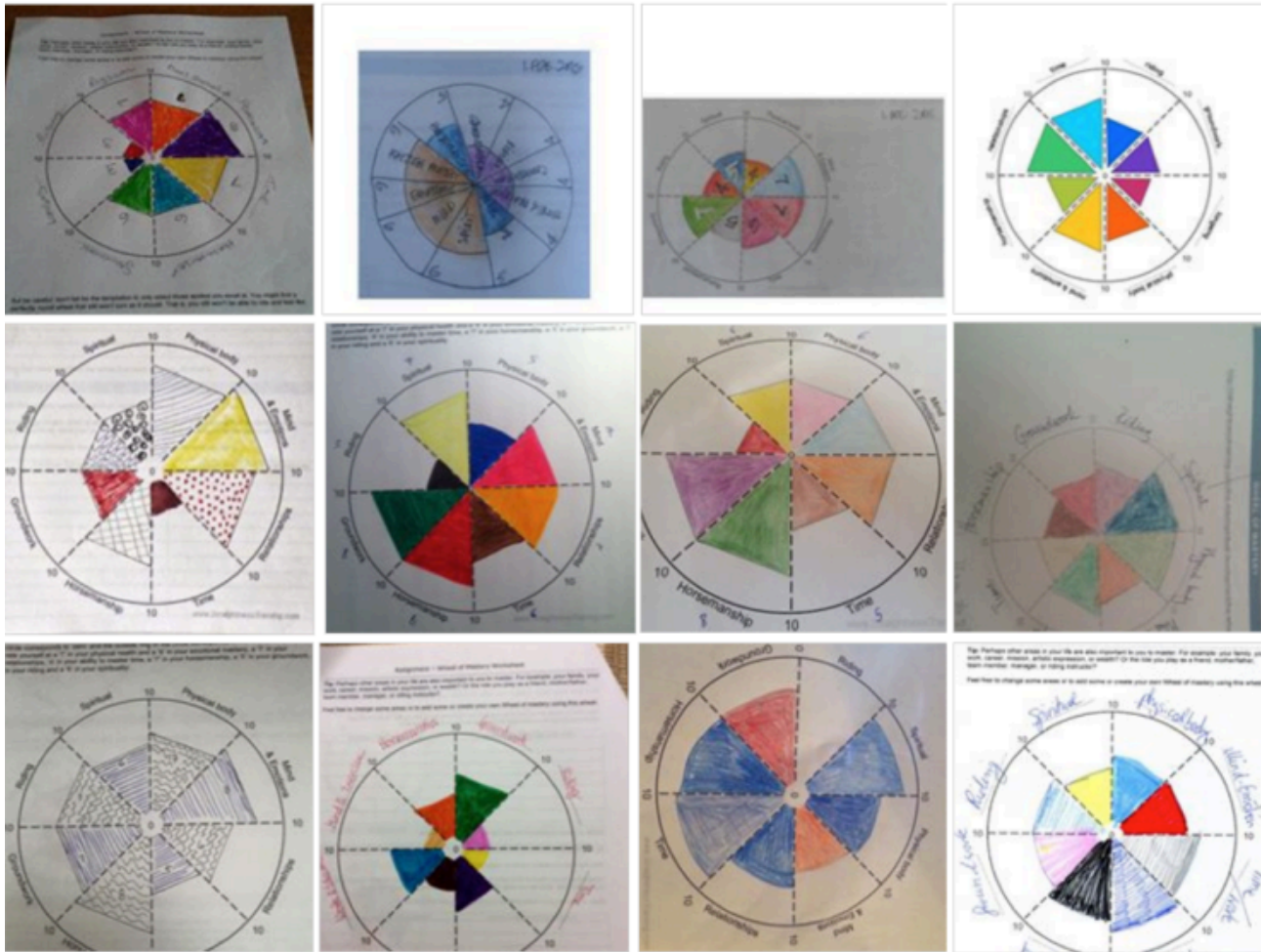
The bigger idea behind the Wheel of Mastery is that all the spokes of the wheel are needed and must be of equal length for a smooth and effective ride.

The selection of what the spokes stand for is based on the conviction that the areas of mastery (the spokes) are coherent, indivisible, and strengthening each other.



Wheel of Mastery

Here are some examples of Mastery Students:



5. EVALUATE AREAS

The next step, is to note what areas you're strong in, but really take a hard look at the areas that need more attention. There are almost certainly areas that are not getting as much attention as you'd like.

However, there may also be areas where you're putting in more effort than you'd ideally like. These areas are absorbing energy and enthusiasm that may better be directed elsewhere.

Areas that ABSORB my attention	Areas that NEEDS attention

Once you have identified the areas that need attention, it's time to make some changes.

6. ACTION PLAN

Plan the actions needed to work on regaining balance.

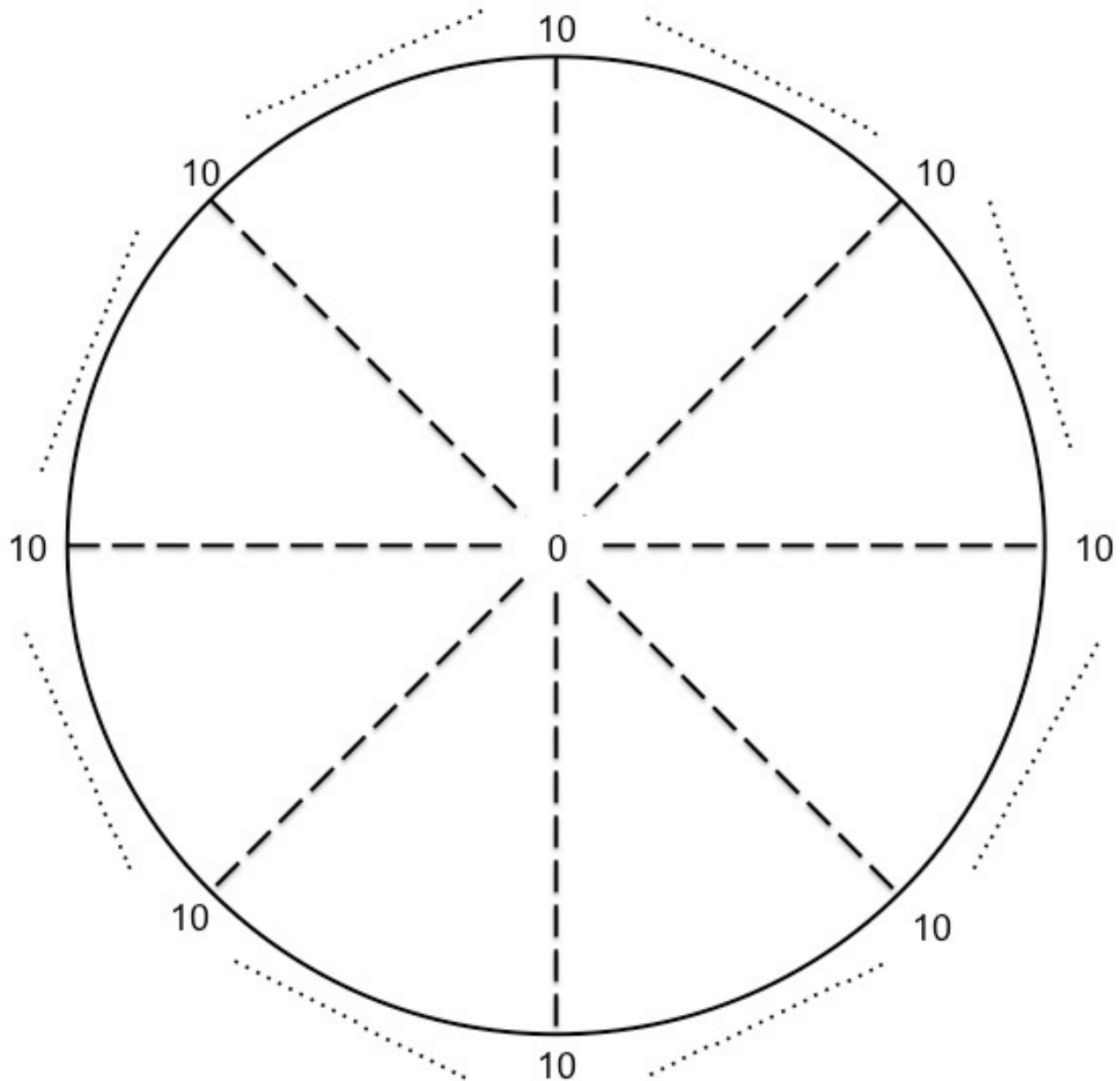
What things do you need to start doing to regain balance? In the areas that currently absorb your energy and time, what can you stop doing or re-prioritize or delegate to someone else?

Make a commitment to these actions by writing them down and just do it!

Things to DO to regain balance	Things to STOP doing or delegate

YOUR PERSONAL WHEEL

Perhaps other areas in your life are also important to you to master. For example: your family, your work, career, mission, artistic expression, or wealth? Or the role you play as a friend, mother/father, team member, manager, or riding instructor? Or you can make a “mind wheel” to check the balance in your learning styles, your needs, your level of consciousness, your beliefs, your rules, your values. Feel free to change some areas, to add some, design a personal Wheel of Mastery:



But be careful: don't fall for the temptation to only select those spokes you excel at... You might find a perfectly round wheel that still won't turn as it should. In other words, you still won't be able to ride and feel like a centaur with your horse.

“When things are out of balance, see it as a challenge!”